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## DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

9 September 1987

Jordan: Prospects for MIG-29 Purchase [REDACTED]

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Summary

We believe that King Hussein will decide to purchase one squadron of MIG-29s from the Soviet Union by the end of the year if no other alternative becomes available--and none appears likely. Jordan's only options are Saudi financing for Mirage 2000s, which apparently will not be forthcoming, or much more generous French terms, which also are unlikely. King Hussein prefers Western aircraft--particularly the US F-16--for both technical and political reasons, but because of their unavailability he has been forced to consider seriously the Soviet offer. The King probably views the additional Soviet presence that would necessarily follow his purchase of MIG-29s and the inevitable political backlash in the West as manageable and as a risk necessary to provide his military with a modern fighter. The King probably believes he can minimize Soviet influence and access to the Jordanian military--he recently denied a Soviet request to establish a permanent military mission in Jordan. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] King Hussein is nearing a decision to purchase 18 MIG-29 aircraft--one squadron--from the Soviet Union. Negotiations since mid-July have focused on financial arrangements for the purchase and on the electronics package to be included in the planes.

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This memorandum was prepared by [REDACTED] the Israel-Jordan-PLO Branch, Arab-Israeli Division, Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis. Information as of 9 September 1987 was used in its preparation. Questions and comments should be addressed to Chief, Arab-Israeli Division, [REDACTED]

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### Hussein's Requirements

The King is determined to modernize his air force, which currently is composed of three squadrons of obsolete US F-5 interceptors and two squadrons of French F-1s. Hussein recognizes that he cannot compete with the buildup of his two potentially hostile neighbors--Syria and Israel--but he believes that without a credible air force equipped with modern fighters Jordan's already shrinking deterrent will disappear. Moreover, Hussein in our view is probably concerned that Jordanian pilots--who are aware of Israel's purchase of 75 advanced US F-16s and Syria's recent receipt of a squadron of MIG-29s--will become increasingly disgruntled with their own aging planes and the King's inability to redress this situation. [REDACTED]

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The King clearly prefers Western aircraft such as the French Mirage 2000, the British Tornado, and particularly the US F-16. His inability to obtain Saudi financing for French or British planes and Congressional rejection of his requests for F-16s have forced him to give Moscow's offer serious consideration. [REDACTED]

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### Soviet Influence on the Rise?

Senior Jordanian officials--including Air Force Chief Shurdom--have expressed concern that the advisors, technicians and instructors the Soviets would send to Jordan to service the aircraft would jeopardize air force security. [REDACTED]

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earlier this year denied a Soviet request to establish a military mission in Jordan. Nevertheless, a MIG-29 purchase would require significantly more than the 50 to 65 Soviet air defense and other advisors already in Jordan. We judge that about 50 additional Soviet advisors would be required to support one squadron of Mig-29s. [REDACTED]

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Jordan's military leadership is largely Western-trained and oriented, and almost certainly is worried by expanding military ties with the Soviets. The bulk of Jordan's forces still possesses US- and British-built equipment, and they rely heavily on the West for training, spare parts, and maintenance support. Jordanian officers have observed the impressive results Israel has achieved with Western-equipped and trained forces over Syria's Soviet-style air force and credit much of Israel's success to superior Western equipment and Western command and control procedures. Heavier reliance on Soviet equipment would mean more Soviet training, and ultimately would result in incorporating inferior Soviet tactics--rigid command and control leaving little initiative to the individual pilot. [REDACTED]

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Jordanian experience with Soviet equipment and advisors has been mixed--most senior officials probably still far prefer Western advisory support. [REDACTED]

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But the King has eased into buying Soviet equipment gradually, lessening the negative domestic impact of concluding a major deal with Moscow. Hussein has increasingly turned to the Soviets to fulfill requests denied him by the US Congress. He has purchased Soviet SA-8s, -13s and -14s instead of Hawks and Stingers, and BMPs instead of Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicles. A purchase of MIG-29s--rather than the requested F-16s--would thus be another extension in this growing chain of Soviet buys. [ ]

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#### US Concerns Take Back Seat to Operational Requirements

Hussein is acutely aware of US sensitivity to his expanding relationship with Moscow. But the US-Jordanian military relationship has declined steadily since Hussein's requests for arms were denied in the early 1980's. During the past five years--but particularly since 1984 when the King's request for F-16s stalled in Congress--Jordan's purchases from the US, US military assistance, and contact between the two militaries have declined. The King probably judges he has little to lose by accepting the generous Soviet offer. [ ]

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King Hussein almost certainly regards US discomfort over his dealings with the Soviets as manageable--and as Washington's fault. We believe he regards the US Congressional stipulation that Jordan must begin peace negotiations with Israel before it will get advanced US arms as unreasonable and unacceptable. Moreover, Hussein felt betrayed by the US dealings with Iran late last year, believing the US action undermined years of effort to isolate Iran. Even the Jordanian military--a staunch supporter of close Jordanian-US military ties over many years--increasingly perceives the US as an inconsistent and reluctant supporter. A further cooling in the relationship is unlikely to upset the rank-and-file of the Jordanian army. [ ]

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#### Outlook

We believe King Hussein's uncompromising commitment to his military--the linchpin of the regime--will prevail over opposition among his senior advisors to concluding a major deal with Moscow. In our view, the King is determined to modernize his air force and is convinced that purchasing MIG-29s has become his only alternative. [ ]

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The King, in our view, recognizes the Soviet offer for what it is--an attempt to purchase greater access to Jordan's military and increased influence in the Middle East--and accordingly will strive to minimize Soviet inroads. Nevertheless, a Jordanian purchase of MIG-29s underscores the decline in Amman's dependence on the US for military hardware, and will further distance King Hussein and the Jordanian military from its traditional mentor--in the process reducing US influence with Amman. [ ]

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**Jordan's Fighter Aircraft Inventory**

<b>Aircraft</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Delivered to Jordan</b>
<b>F-5 E</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>Late 70s</b>
<b>F-5 A</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Early 70s</b>
<b>F-1 C</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1980-81</b>
<b>F-1 E</b>	<b><u>12</u></b>	<b>Early 80s</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	

**Air Balance**

	<b>ISRAEL</b>	<b>SYRIA</b>	<b>JORDAN</b>
<b>Modern Fighters</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Others</b>	<b><u>200</u></b>	<b><u>100</u></b>	<b><u>68</u></b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>620</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>96</b>

**SUBJECT: Jordan: Prospects for MIG-29 Purchase**

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